

in a carefully targeted way. These reforms, which continue my promise to mend, not end affirmative action, expand opportunities for small disadvantaged businesses.

These new guidelines allow small disadvantaged businesses to receive a price credit of up to 10 percent in bidding for Federal contracts. The credits will be available only in industries that show the ongoing effects of discrimination. The Department of Commerce identified these industries through a process called benchmarking, which compares the actual share of Federal procurement by small disadvantaged firms to the share that would be expected in the absence of discrimination. Limiting credits to these industries satisfies constitutional requirements while targeting our efforts in areas where disparities still exist.

This program is based on authority given the administration by Congress in 1994. These credits will help level the playing field for firms that have suffered from discrimination. However, they do not ensure that any firm will win a contract. Small disadvantaged businesses must compete with all other businesses to win Federal contracts.

The steps we are taking today comply with legal requirements and preserve competition, while serving to remedy discrimination.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Proposed "Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998"

June 24, 1998

Dear _____:

I am writing to urge the Senate (House) to act quickly this year to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998. This crucial legislation would expand the ability of the Justice Department to prosecute hate crimes by removing needless jurisdictional requirements for existing crimes and by giving Federal prosecutors the power to prosecute hate crimes committed because of the victim's sexual orientation, gender, or disability.

As you know, there have been a number of recent tragedies across our country that involve hate crimes. I know you were as troubled as I was by the vicious murder in Jasper, Texas, just two weeks ago. This shocking

event focused America's attention on the problem of hate crimes. I hope we can join together to reaffirm that no American should be subjected to violence on account of his or her race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disability.

Whether it is a gay American murdered as he walks home from work or a Jewish American whose synagogue is desecrated by swastikas, such acts are not only examples of bias and bigotry—they are crimes. They strike at the heart of what it means to be an American and at the values that define us as a Nation. That is why I believe now is the time for us to take strong and decisive action to fight hate crimes.

There is nothing more important to the future of this country than our standing together against intolerance, prejudice, and violent bigotry. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act will lead the way in making all Americans more safe and secure. I implore you to move this vital piece of legislation through the Senate (House) without delay.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader; and Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the contents of this letter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Peacekeeping Operations

June 24, 1998

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am pleased to transmit herewith the 1997 Annual Report to the Congress on Peacekeeping. The report is required by section 407(d) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103-236).

The report provides an account of how the United States used peacekeeping last year to promote regional stability and to advance U.S. interests. Our support for United Nations and other peacekeeping operations allowed us to protect our interests before they